DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 159 EC 302 762

AUTHOR	Richert, E. Susanne
TITLE	Equitable Identification of Students with Gifted Potential.
INSTITUTION	Kansas State Board of Education, Topeka.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	92
CONTRACT	R206A00008
NOTE	25p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Ability Identification; Access to Education; Definitions; Educational Practices; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; Eligibility; *Equal Education; *Gifted; Minority Groups; Secondary School Students; Talent Identification; Testing Problems

ABSTRACT

This monograph is organized in three main sections addressing problems, promising practices, and equitable procedures low cost in the identification of students with gifted potential. The first section considers problems in identification. These include: (1) elitist and distorted definitions of giftedness, (2) confusion about purposes of identification, (3) violation of educational equity, (4) misuse of identification instruments, (5) unreliable data, (6) inappropriate combination of data, and (7) too few students identified. The section on promising practices discusses principles of identification, defensible definitions, and selection of tests and instruments. Topics discussed in the equitable procedures section include avoiding discrimination and charges of elitism; equitable use of academic achievement data; alternate test procedures for students with learning disabilities or other handicaps; appropriate use of multiple sources of data; data from parents, teachers, and peers; self-nominations; and use of data on student progress. Low-cost high quality program design is also briefly addressed. A conclusion emphasizes that gifted program identification practices should reflect the values of pluralism and equity. (Contains 63 references.) (DB)

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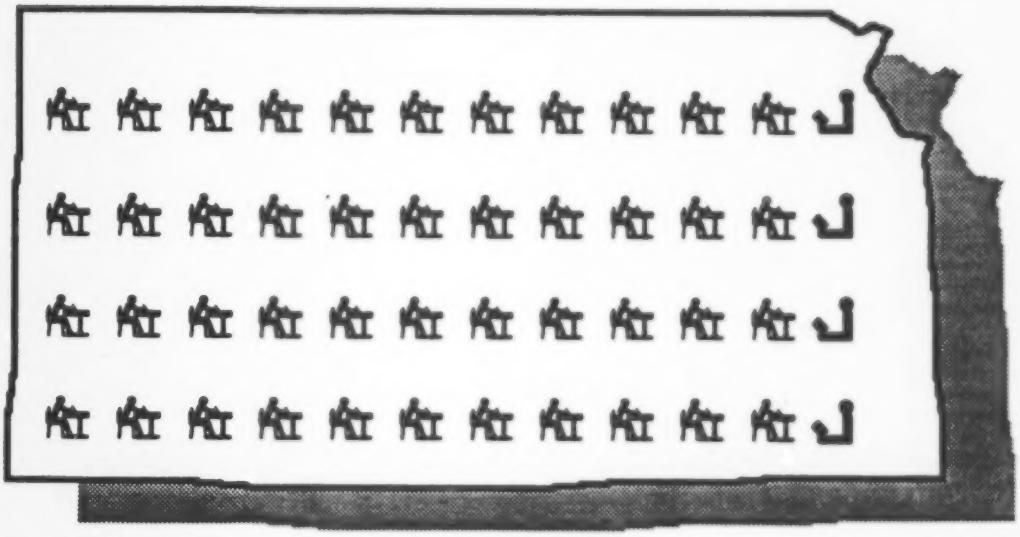
ED 366 159

Equitable Identification of Students with Gifted Potential



By Dr. E. Susanne Richert
for Kansas State Board of Education
1992

Reprinted September, 1993

EC 302762

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EQUITABLE IDENTIFICATION
Of Students with Gifted Potential

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The views expressed in this guide are those of the author, and not necessarily of the Kansas State Board of Education or of the United States Department of Education.

Widespread Problems in Identification of Gifted Students

✔ Elitist and Distorted Definitions of Giftedness

Many districts and states are using elitist definitions of giftedness that include only certain kinds of gifted students, most often those who are white, middle class and academically achieving. A major purpose of the federally legislated definition was to expand the concept of giftedness beyond IQ (Marland, 1972). Yet, in practice, even more limited definitions are applied. Some state or local definitions distort the intention of the federal definition by inappropriately distinguishing between gifted and talented. They create a hierarchy by using the former for general intellectual ability, as measured primarily by intelligence tests, and the latter for the other gifted abilities referred to in the federal definition: specific academic aptitude, creative, visual and performing arts, and leadership abilities.

Some state departments of education, for example that of New York, distort J. S. Renzulli's conception of giftedness. They define "gifted" students as those demonstrating above-average ability, creativity and motivation. These students are eligible for program enrollment. Students who demonstrate only two of these characteristics are defined as "talented" and are not eligible for program enrollment (New York State Department of Education, n.d., p. 2).

Such distinctions ignore the differences between the full manifestations of giftedness expressed in adults and the potential of children. Gifted programs are designed to develop the potential giftedness of children so that they may attain full expression in adulthood.

Discrimination among students with gifted potential is based on indices of present performance on test instruments and not on predictors of adult gifted achievement. There is a tremendous difference between the two. It is important to remember that giftedness in test taking is not yet a recognized field of human endeavor!

False distinctions between talented and gifted children, or designating degrees of giftedness ("highly," "severely," "profoundly," or "exotically" gifted) rather than specifying the identification procedures used (high IQ or high achievement) creates implicit hierarchies, engenders elitism within programs, and excludes many students with gifted potential. Such implicit hierarchies ignore the fact that giftedness emerges through the interaction of innate abilities and learning or experience, as Renzulli (1978), Richert (1986), Richert et al. (1982), Tannenbaum (1983) and others assert.

There are a variety of reasons for such elitism. The major bias that impels such practices is the prevalent myth that academic achievement is related to adult giftedness. Repeated studies have revealed no correlation, or sometimes a small negative correlation, between academic achievement and grades and adult giftedness in a broad range of fields (Baird, 1982, Holland & Richards 1965; Hoyt, 1965; Munday & Davis, 1974, Price, Taylor, Richards, & Jacobsen, 1964; Taylor & Ellison, 1967; Taylor, Albo, Holland, & Brandt, 1985). This should not be surprising since many of the evaluation criteria for determining grades, such as propensity for convergent thinking, conformity to expectations of teachers or test makers and meeting externally determined deadlines are inversely correlated with adult eminence or original contributions to most fields.

These studies demonstrate that test scores predict test scores; grades predict grades. Giftedness, or original contribution to a field, requires non-academic abilities including creativity and intrinsic motivation that are unrelated or inversely related to school achievement.

✔ Confusion about the Purposes of Identification

There are several kinds of confusion about the purposes of identification. Identification is not, as too many people assume, a mere categorization of gifted abilities already made manifest. If it were, educational programs would be unnecessary. **Identification is actually a needs assessment for the purpose of placing students into educational programs designed to develop their latent potential.**

Some groups involved in identification try to use it to meet their own personal needs. It is well known that some parents, out of a desire to have their children reaffirm parental self-esteem, want a label for the innate abilities their children inherited from them (see Miller, 1981, *Prisoners of Childhood*, about parents of gifted children using their children to meet their narcissistic needs).

Teachers, administrators and often parents feel that entry into a program for the gifted should be a reward for achievement of "good" behavior, operationally defined as conformity to school or test-maker expectations. Many educators also seem to want the identification procedure to reaffirm the values inherent in the school systems to which they have committed their own abilities. This is a distortion of the purpose of gifted programs, which is to maximizes exceptional potential. These programs are necessary because the standard curriculum rarely does so.

Problems in Identification

Giftedness requires originality, risk taking and intrinsic motivation. It could well be argued that conformity to school expectations and external rewards, such as grades or test scores, may inhibit giftedness. Activities beyond and outside the required curriculum are therefore probably the best predictors of adult gifted achievement (Goleman, 1984; Guilford,1977). The only defensible rationale in our democratic society for additional expenditures related to gifted programs is student need, not reward for conformity to teacher or test-maker expectations, which is essentially how students become academic achievers.

✔ Violation of Educational Equity

Some gifted students are consistently being screened out by present practices. In national figures kept by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, **minority groups such as blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans are under-represented by 30 to 70% in gifted programs** (U.S. Department of Education, 1979). These figures are collected each year but are evidently considered so controversial that they have not been published since 1979.

While most states formally subscribe to the comprehensive federal definition of giftedness, in practice many local districts tend to seek—and to find—white, middle class academic achievers. Measures of academic achievement that are most often used by schools, including teacher recommendations, grades and most especially standardized tests, have been amply demonstrated to have cultural biases (Black, 1963; Davis, Gardner, & Gardner 1941; Goolsby, 1975; Hoffman, 1962; Kamin, 1974; Klineberg, 1935; Miller 1974; Nairn & Associates, 1980; Samuda 1975).

The National Report on Identification (Richert et al.,1982) reveals that measures of academic achievement, which are not very good predictors of adult gifted achievement, are also effectively screening out the following sub-populations:

- Underachieving, learning-disabled, handicapped and minority students who most need programs to develop their potential.
- The most creative and divergent thinkers. Inevitably, these students will be excluded by IQ tests as Torrance (1979) has pointed out.

There is always a range of economic differences within a school district even if there is cultural homogeneity within it. A significant finding of the *National Report* is that the poor are consistently screened out of gifted programs because their disadvantage cuts across every other sub-population (Richert et al., 1982). In data being collected by Richert, she has found that **the poor, defined by the federal standard of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, are underrepresented from 100 to 500%.**

Problems in Identification

Because one pernicious effect of the "excellence" reforms has been even greater reliance on standardized tests for assessment, this discrimination has not only persisted but has actually increased since 1979. This shocking inequity is a problem not only for those excluded from gifted programs, but also for those included. It makes programs vulnerable to charges of elitism.

✔ Identification instruments are being misused

The National Report on Identification revealed that for the five areas of giftedness in the federal definition, there are major discrepancies between reported practices and the intended use of various tests and instruments. **Tests are being used in ways that test makers never intended, sometimes to measure abilities that they were not designed to determine.**

For example, achievement and IQ tests are used almost interchangeably, thereby confusing the categories of specific academic and general intellectual ability. They are also being inappropriately used to identify qualities of creativity and leadership (national survey of identification practices reported in *National Report on Identification*, Richert et al., 1982, Chap. 2, pp.23-39).

Instruments and procedures are being used at inappropriate stages of identification. Diagnosis is not the purpose of initial screening procedures. However, screening by employing diagnostic tests such as the Stanford Achievement Test (reading and math) and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests is common. Such tests are only useful for determining placement in a particular course or for measuring progress once students are placed within a program option (*National Report on Identification*, Richert et al., 1982, pp. 35, 62).

Another problem occurs when data from parents are gathered only after students have been nominated by teachers or they have qualified for a talent pool through a test score. Under such procedures, disadvantaged students are screened out.

The same error occurs when teachers assess the creativity or motivation of students after they have qualified for a talent pool by a standardized achievement test score, or when individualized IQ tests are given only to students after they qualify through a group IQ test, or teacher referral. **Most of the efforts to use data beyond achievement measures are merely cosmetic. They often reinforce the exclusion of the same disadvantaged groups of students.**

Problems in Identification

✔ Cosmetic and Distorting Use of Multiple Criteria

One of the few positive trends for identification is the collection and use of data from a variety of sources. Practitioners in many states are typically using test scores (IQ, achievement, or both), teacher observations and sometimes even parent observations. The intent of collecting a variety of data may appear to make the procedure more defensible and inclusive. However, data are often misused in several ways: The data may be unreliable, used at an inappropriate stage of identification, weighted in indefensible ways or invalidly placed in a matrix containing other data.

✔ Unreliable Data.

In most districts, teachers tend to be involved in identifying students for programs. There is ample evidence from several studies that teachers without training in characteristics of the gifted are often unreliable sources of identification data (Baldwin, 1962; Barbe, 1964; Ciha, Harris, Hoffman, & Potter, 1974; Cornish, 1968; Gear, 1976,1978; Holland, 1959; Jacobs, 1971; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Wilson, 1963). Other questionable sources of information include locally designed checklists or observation forms that are not research based.

✔ Inappropriate Combination of Data.

The statistically unsound practice of combining data from multiple sources in various matrices or other weighted scoring procedures was strongly criticized by a national panel of experts because it may obscure a variety of important indicators of gifted potential (Richert et al., 1982).

While the combination of creativity, productivity and task commitment are indisputable requisites for manifestations of adult giftedness, the relative importance and the developmental patterns of each of these in children has not yet been demonstrated. Adding the results of various procedures or measures is also questionable since it is the statistical equivalent of "adding apples and oranges".

The range, standard deviations, reliability and construct/content validity of different measures, whether formal or informal, are not necessarily equivalent. Adding the various scores together or arbitrarily determining weights is highly problematic (Richert et al., 1982). Furthermore, **combining data inappropriately also tends to identify jacks-of-all-trades, or students who develop ability, creativity, and motivation concurrently. It may eliminate the "masters of some," who especially need a gifted program to develop their potential.**

Problems in Identification

For example:

- Students with a very high IQ. These students may be underachieving in school because of the extreme inappropriateness of the regular curriculum and may not receive teacher or parent nominations.
- Exceptionally creative students. These students are often screened out by IQ or achievement measures (Torrance 1979).
- Creative students. Gifted students who are independent, rebellious and nonconforming tend not to receive teacher or parent recommendations.

Furthermore, most of the identification procedures used, such as standardized tests, teacher recommendations and grades (often used for such secondary program options as honors, AP, or accelerated courses), are really measures of conformity to middle-class academic values and achievement. The national survey of practices reported in the *National Report on Identification* (Richert et al., 1982, Chap. 2) revealed that even when multiple measures are used, standardized test scores tend to be given disproportionate weight. **The more measures that are used and combined inappropriately, the more likely it becomes that disadvantaged students (poor, minority, creative, and others who tend to be underachievers in schools) will be excluded.**

Therefore, the use of multiple measures, which may create the appearance of inclusiveness can actually exacerbate elitism in identification.

✔ Too few students are identified

Because of increasingly limited resources, there have been several counterproductive trends among theoreticians and groups vying for services. Parents whose children are being served through present identification practices defend the status quo because they fear their children will be excluded if other groups, such as the disadvantaged, are included. Many administrators argue that because of limited resources, only small numbers of students can be served. This results in the identification of the same white middle class students year after year.

One unfortunate outcome of educational reforms trying to foster "excellence" has been the reinforcement of elitist programs that serve as few as 2 to 5% of students. Program modes that delineate a hierarchical pattern (pyramids or ladders), rather than an egalitarian model (that simply acknowledges various kinds of gifted potential), create unnecessary forms of elitism. No one knows how many students have gifted potential, since no one in the United States has made an effort to elicit giftedness from all students.

Problems in Identification

By definition, gifted programs cannot serve all children. However, serving fewer than 25% of all students will exclude too many students with gifted potential. Although many states and districts use broad written definitions, in practice, primarily students with one pattern of manifestation of giftedness are served. These are most often the high achieving and conforming students. In addition, considerable effort by writers in the field is being expended in debates as to which are the single best program models, rather than in the development of practical inexpensive program models that could serve more students.

Promising Practices in Identification

✔ Principles of Identification

Principles for assessing identification procedures emerged through the deliberations of the national panel of experts that met as part of the **National Report on Identification** (Richert et al., 1982). Practitioners should consider these carefully in decision-making. These principles include:

1. **Defensibility**. Procedures should be based on the best available research and recommendations, not the preferences of a local group.
2. **Advocacy.** Identification should be designed in the best interests of all students. Students should not be harmed by procedures.
3. **Equity.**
   - Procedures should guarantee that no one is overlooked.
   - The civil rights of students should be protected.
   - Strategies should be specified for identifying the disadvantaged gifted.
   - Cut off scores should be avoided since they are the most common way that disadvantaged students are discriminated against. (High scores should be used to include students, but if students meet other criteria, through self or parent nominations, for example, then a lower test score should also be used to include them.)
4. **Pluralism.** The broadest defensible definition of giftedness should be used.
5. **Comprehensiveness.** As many students with gifted potential as possible should be identified and served.
6. **Pragmatism.** Whenever possible, procedures should allow for the modification and use of instruments and resources on hand, including program designs that allow serving up to 25% of the student body.

✔ Defensible Definitions

The National Report on Identification (Richert et al., 1982) analyzed **a strong trend in the United States toward a broadening of definitions over the last century to include multiple abilities and factors of giftedness.** A few of the contributors to that direction include Guilford in his multifactored structure of intellect model (1977), Torrance (1964) in creativity, Renzulli (1978) in elaborating some of the motivational factors in giftedness, Tannenbaum (1983) in stressing the non-intellective and experiential variables in manifestations of giftedness, Roeper (1982) in suggesting that it might be necessary to develop a concept of emotional giftedness and Piechowski and Colangelo's (1984) elaboration of Dabrowski's conceptualization of a developmental potential intrinsic to giftedness.

In the area of cognitive science, the publications of Gardner (1983; see Chapter 5) and Sternberg (1985; see Chapter 4), as well as the special issue of the *Roeper Review* (Silverman, 1986b), emphasize the recognition of diverse, discrete, cognitive abilities in the identification of giftedness. In addition, I have argued for a comprehensive and pluralistic definition that not only acknowledges the existence of various exceptional abilities but is ethical in that it will not harm or limit the potential of exceptional students (Richert, 1986, 1987, 1991).

Definitions of giftedness should not harm students. Students who are labeled gifted resent the label with good reason (Colangelo & Brower, 1987; Kerr, Colangelo, & Gaeth, 1988). Often, inappropriate expectations for consistently high academic performance are projected by educators or parents onto identified students. It is much more defensible, in terms of the research, and more acceptable, in terms of students' self- concepts, to **view the identification process as a needs assessment that targets untapped gifted potential.**

Districts should use broad, pluralistic definitions, such as the federally legislated definition that includes diverse abilities. Such definitions may identify up to 25% of the student body as requiring a program to help develop their diverse gifted potentials.

✔ Selection of Tests and Instruments

The misuse of tests can be avoided by considering the cautions and recommendations of the panel of experts for *The National Report* (Richert et al., 1982), which are summarized on the list of tests and recommendations for use in Table 1. The list indicates the appropriateness of tests for different abilities, populations and stages of identification. Practitioners should follow the following precautions in the use of tests:

1. Select different measures and procedures to identify each diverse gifted ability.
2. Address these issues before using any test:
   - Is the test appropriate for the ability being sought?

- Is the test being used at the appropriate stage of identification (i.e., nomination into a broad talent pool; assessment for a specific program option; evaluation within a program)?
- Is the test appropriate for disadvantaged sub-populations within the district. Poor, minority, creative, underachieving, and other subpopulations are typically discriminated against in measures of academic achievement.

Equitable Procedures for Identifying Groups Disadvantaged in Identification

✔ Avoid Discrimination and Charges of Elitism

Discrimination should be assiduously guarded against both for the purpose of equity and to avoid charges of elitism. Unfortunately, discrimination often occures because of the bias in collected data. Gifted education is under serious attack nationally in response to the very useful research of Oakes (1985) and Goodlad (1984). Their research points to social segregation caused by various forms of what they call "ability" grouping, but which is actually "achievement" grouping since it is based solely on achievement measures such as standardized tests, teacher recommendations and grades. Unfortunately, Oakes' and Goodlads' recommended remedy of eliminating all forms of grouping is especially harmful to students with gifted potential.

To find students with gifted potential among the social groups most disadvantaged in an identification process requires special procedures. Otherwise, measures which rely heavily on measures of academic achievement (such as teacher recommendations, grades, or standardized tests), will effectively discriminate among:

- The poor (students meeting federal standards for qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch)
- Culturally diverse races or cultures
- Students with minimal proficiency in English
- Males (when identifying verbal ability below the fifth grade)
- Females (when identifying mathematical or science ability)

Regardless of a student's social background, special efforts are necessary to identify the intellectually creative, the academically underachieving, and the handicapped or learning disabled students with gifted potential. These students tend to be excluded from programs that rely primarily on measures of academic achievement:

Equitable Procedures

The following recommended equitable identification procedures eliminate the potential charges of discrimination and elitism. They guarantee the creation of a demographically representative group.

✔ Equitable Use of Academic Achievement Data

Be careful when using actual test data or teacher recommendations to identify students. If the outcome is more than a 5 to 10% under-representation of any individual sub-population (the poor, minority races or cultures, students with minimal proficiency in English, males or females) within a school district, then the following procedures guaranteeing equity should be used.

When selecting standardized tests, only those tests deemed appropriate by the national panel of experts for disadvantaged students should be considered. *The National Report* (Richert et al., 1982) lists more than 12 tests that have been assessed as appropriate for the sub-populations in various school districts. These are indicated on the list of instruments in Table 1. There are several problems in selecting tests for various populations. School districts must consider the cost of independent research to justify a choice over those listed in the table. Questions may also be raised as to whether the instruments are measuring the same abilities or whether comparisons across tests are valid.

If a district is using a test that is not approved for one of its disadvantaged sub-populations, **the most practical approach is to use existing test data but to renorm it to overcome test bias**. In a procedure approved by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, the scores may be disaggregated (i.e., broken down) by various populations in order to factor out the inherent bias in most standardized tests (Angoff, 1971; Hansen, Hurwitz, & Madow, 1953; Sudman 1976; Wood & Talmadge, 1976). **Renorming allows the selection of the same percentage of students from each sub-population to ensure equal representation from each group.**

The purpose of renorming is not merely to achieve equity. Rather than relying solely on school achievement, which is skewed by social and economic environmental differences, the major objective of renorming is to identify inherent and latent gifted potential in all populations.

These are the steps for renorming test scores or teacher nominations.

1. Determine whether the existing procedure under-identifies any of the disadvantaged sub-populations in the district by more than 5 to 10% to determine whether the following steps should be taken.

Equitable Procedures

2. Determine the percentage of students that will be identified for each program option. (For example, a district may chose to select 25% of its students for program options in mathematics and reading in grades K-6.)
3. Disaggregate the scores. Determine in which of these categories students belong:
   - Economic:
     Disadvantaged (use federal guidelines for free or reduced-price lunch)
     Advantaged (not needing free or reduced-price lunch)
   - Races or cultures:
     African American
     Caucasian
     Hispanic
     Other
   - Sex:
     Male
     Female
4. Rank-order the disaggregated scores from the various populations within each group.
5. The same percentage of the top-scoring students from each sub-population is selected as from among the advantaged students' population. For example, assume that a district has resources for serving 25% of its students, grades K-8, in homogeneously grouped classes in reading. Then based on achievement subtest scores in reading, the top 25% of the African American students, the top 25% of the Caucasian students, top 25% of the Hispanic students, etc. and the top 25% of the boys, and the top 25% of the girls should be selected for services.

Students will, of course, fall into several categories (economic, social, sex), but a balance can be worked out so that the outcome is a group representative of the district's school population.

If data from teachers do not differ markedly from test scores, then rather than offering complementary information, the data may have a similar bias. In that case, data from teachers may be renormed in the same manner. The scores from teacher nomination forms can be disaggregated and ranked within each of the various sub-populations and a fixed top percentage from within, rather than across, each sub-population may be selected.

These procedures are being successfully used in at least two federally funded Javits grants serving more than a dozen districts in Kansas and New Jersey.

Equitable Procedures

✔ Alternative Test Procedures for Learning Disabled or Handicapped Students

Tests that are not affected by specific handicapping conditions should be used to assess the exceptional potential of learning disabled and handicapped students. These students may also be identified by using non-standardized data, such as parent, self or teacher nominations.

✔ Appropriate Use of Multiple Sources of Data

Recent work in the field of cognitive science, as reviewed above in the discussion of defensible definitions, presents a very strong case for multiple and discrete kinds of intelligence (rather than single-factored intelligence), each of which requires different assessment measures.

Precautions should be taken when using data from various measures. Districts should not "add apples and oranges" when collecting formal and informal data. **The purpose of using data from different sources is not to validate or confirm one source with another** (parent nomination and teacher nomination, or IQ and achievement test scores, for example). The goal of using multiple sources of data is to have a variety of measures complement each other in order to find diverse indicators of potential that a single measure cannot reflect.

Data from different sources should be used independently, and each individual source should be sufficient to include a student in a program. High scores should be used only to include students. **Cutoff scores should not be used** since they tend to exclude creative, underachieving, and disadvantaged students.

Percentages of top scoring students from within, rather than across, each demographic group should be used instead. Intellectually creative or disadvantaged students should not be excluded from a program solely on the basis of a test score if there are other indicators of exceptional potential, such as teacher, parent, or self-nominations. In other words, a high score on a **non-standardized** measure or a standardized test should be enough to offer entry into a program for at least 1 year. Students should be able to qualify for a program by scoring high on any of several measures, rather than on most or all.

Equitable Procedures

✔ Data from Parents, Teachers and Peers

Checklists and other informal data from parents, teachers and peers should be used appropriately. They should complement, rather than confirm, tests or other data about school achievement at appropriate stages of an on going assessment. They are especially important to ensure identification of the disadvantaged populations previously cited . At the primary (K-3) level, parents are among the best sources of information about a child's strengths and intrinsic motivation demonstrated by extracurricular activities outside school.

At all grade levels, **teachers, but only if they are trained in negative characteristics of the gifted, are particularly good sources of observations** about creative behaviors. Without such training, data from teachers may offer information even less useful than standardized tests (Gear, 1976, 1978).

Checklists provide opportunities for seeking information about students' activities beyond the required curriculum. Peer nominations are useful especially to find leadership potential, for it is from peers that leaders emerge and by peers that leaders must first be recognized. Peer nominations also have some utility in the area of creativity, since peers have a good basis for judging the exceptionality, imaginativeness and uniqueness of a fellow student's ideas.

The panelists for the *National Report* (Richert et al., 1982) stressed that the following standards should be used for such instruments:

- Characteristics listed should be research based, not just the product of a well-intentioned local committee (see Chapter 6 of the *National Report* and at the end of this monograph).
- The list should include negative or unexpected characteristics indicated by the research.
- Teachers using such instruments must be trained to observe the "negative" behaviors of gifted and potentially gifted students.

In addition, nomination forms should produce different scores for diverse abilities. For example, a minimum requirement would be for teacher observation checklists to evaluate both the specific academic abilities addressed by the program and intellectual creativity. Because achievement and IQ tests tend to screen out the most creative students and teachers often have biases against the nonconforming student, nominations for creativity are especially crucial. With the exception of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (the Figural version is especially useful with all populations including the disadvantaged) (Torrance & Ball, 1984) and the Structure of the Intellect—Learning Abilities test (Meeker, Meeker, & Roid, 1985), there are very few readily available standardized tests that will elicit scores in creativity.

✔ Self-Nominations

Starting at about grade 4, self-nominations have been used very successfully in many programs. Students are informed about the curriculum and its objectives and they are invited to visit various program options. They apply for those that interest them. This method taps into the intrinsic motivation and intense interests of the gifted. Table 3 includes an interview protocol for self-nominations. Table 4 is a form for assessing interviews in terms of student motivation, interests, creativity and quality of efforts beyond the required curriculum. Self-nomination forms successfully used in several program are included in the appendices.

✔ Use of Data on Student Progress

The last stage of identification is evaluation. If a program for the gifted offers effective, trained staff, appropriate curriculum and enough time within each program option, then identification should be an ongoing process. Students should be assessed annually to determine whether they should remain in a particular program option or would be better served in another option or in the regular classroom. They should not be assessed as to whether or not they are still "gifted."

The same data being gathered to evaluate individual students may be used in aggregate for program evaluation and improvement.

Richert et al. (1982, 1991) and Hagen (in an interview by Silverman, 1986a), among others, point out that criteria used to place students into programs are not necessarily appropriate for exiting them. The real challenge in evaluating student progress in a program for the gifted is the development of standards for evaluation that correlate with adult original contributions to a field. This will defeat the present low or inverse correlation between school performance and later original contributions and more students will be able to develop their gifted potential.

Equitable Procedures

Data on student progress in a program option should determine whether a student continues in the program each year. Not data from any changes in standardized test scores that may have occurred since a student's entry into the program. Program options should be related to the program's curriculum objectives. They should be designed to develop not only cognitive abilities, both creative and critical-thinking, but also emotional and ethical abilities. (See Richert, 1986, for analysis of the higher levels of cognitive, affective, and ethical taxonomies appropriate for curriculum objectives.)

The few standardized tests appropriate at this stage are specified in the "Evaluation" column on the list of test instruments included in Table 1. These tests may provide some assessment of progress in critical thinking ability. However, teacher, self and peer product and process evaluations are very useful indicators of progress. Product evaluations should include assessments of critical thinking and of higher level cognitive skills such as creativity, complexity, and pragmatism (does it work?)

Process evaluation by student and teacher should address, in addition to cognitive skills, higher level affective and social skills such as independence, intrinsic motivation, risk taking, persistence, decision making, and cooperation.

Process and product evaluation may be carried out through the use of various criterion-referenced scales and checklists that address the goals of the program. Many have been collected in an evaluation handbook (Richert, 1978).

Elsewhere, I have pointed out that the regular classroom is a de facto identification procedure (Richert, 1987, 1991). If the regular classroom develops only those abilities that can be measured by tests or recognized by teachers, then many underachieving or disadvantaged students will be missed in identification. If, however, the regular class does indeed develop higher level cognitive and affective abilities, then it can offer what may be called a developmental curriculum that can evoke gifted potential (Richert, 1987).

The long-range educational goal of all districts should be to train all teachers in methods that maximize the potential of all students. Then, whatever a student's background, characteristics, or diverse potential, she could be identified for a special program because her abilities would become manifest. Another immeasurable benefit of this approach would be the improvement of the quality of education for all students. This is one of the ways that the goal of Machado (1980), to develop maximum intellectual potential in all segments of Venezuelan society, could be applied in our society.

Equitable Procedures

✔ Low-Cost High Quality Programs

Because of the inevitable competition for resources, an inexpensive program design is necessary to serve the 20-25% of students with gifted potential who require programs to develop their abilities. A crucial advocacy issue to consider is that a process identifying far fewer than 20% of students will tend to polarize parents of high-achieving students and disadvantaged or minority students in the competition for places in a program.

In order to develop a high quality program that can serve the diverse needs of up to 26% or even 30% of a student population, I have recommended a five step plan for modifying the diversity of existing district resources (including homogeneous grouping in required subject areas, the regular classroom, co-curricular activities, and electives among many others; Richert, 1985a, b, c). Two of the most crucial steps in this approach are equitable identification and intensive staff development for those faculty who will be teaching the various program options.

Without a pragmatic and comprehensive program design, broad-based and equitable identification cannot be carried out.

Conclusion: Pluralism and Equity

Pluralism, or the celebration of diversity as Alexis de Tocqueville observed, is the hall-mark of American democracy. Rather than developing identification procedures and programs that are elitist and exclusive, programs for the gifted should reflect American pluralism.

Educators should also adopt the Hippocratic injunction to "do no harm" by avoiding errors and distortions that exclude students from programs they need and by not imposing impossible expectations on students.

Programs for students with gifted potential can be defensible and equitable if the following practices are followed:

- Adoption of a comprehensive and pluralistic definition that includes diverse abilities and emphasizes potential rather than labeling,
- Recognition that the purpose of identification and programmatic provisions for the gifted is not to label or to reward achievement or conformity to school expectations, but to find and develop exceptional potential,
- Use of data about cognitive (especially creative) and non-cognitive abilities from various sources beyond academic achievement to identify diverse, discrete gifted abilities,
- Appropriate assessment of data from multiple sources,
- Equitable use of academic achievement data by renorming test scores to overcome bias against various disadvantaged groups, particularly the poor and minority groups,
- Identification of up to 25% of a district's population so that if errors are made, they are errors of inclusion rather than exclusion,
- Development of cost effective multiple program options to serve the diverse needs of a heterogeneous gifted population,
- Funding of appropriate staff development.

This pluralistic approach incorporates the expanding conceptualizations of giftedness and provides equitable, comprehensive, defensible and pragmatic identification procedures and programs. It serves the needs of both students and our society.

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This Publication was completed with support under an Agreement with the Kansas State Board of Education, Jacob K. Javits Gifted Project, under a grant received from the United States Department of Education, Grant No. R206A00008.

Strategic Directions for Kansas Education

The Kansas State Board of Education is charged with the general supervision of public education and other educational interests in the state. While clearly acknowledging the role and importance of local control, the State Board of Education has the responsibility to provide direction and leadership for the structuring of all state educational institutions under its jurisdiction.

The beginning place for determining the mission for the Kansas State Board of Education is the assumption that all Kansas citizens must be involved in their own learning and the learning of others. It is the combined effort of family, school, and community that makes possible the development of a high quality of life. It is the parent who is the first "teacher" of children. As we grow older, we learn that the school, the workplace, and the community support our lifelong learning and our training and retraining. The Board recognizes the responsibility it holds for Kansas educational systems and promoting quality education programs. The mission for Kansas education is:

To prepare each person with the living, learning, and working skills and values necessary for caring, productive, and fulfilling participation in our evolving, global society.

We believe that the strategic directions for the structuring of Kansas education must be organized to:

- create learning communities
- develop and extend resources for parenting programs and early childhood education
- expand learner-outcome curriculum and learner-focused instruction
- provide inclusive learning environments
- strengthen involvement of business and industry in education
- provide quality staff and organizational development.

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